

Grocery Shopping with Families



Background

Grocery shopping with children can be challenging for parents, and for children, too. Certainly the grocery store is not a playground, but it doesn't have to become a battleground either.

This lesson explores ways to make grocery shopping a more pleasant and positive experience for families. Grocery shopping can be a great opportunity for children to learn, to gain useful skills and self-confidence, and for parents and children to enjoy a useful and regular activity together.

Building on the knowledge parents already have, this lesson gives parents useful tools they can use before, during and after shopping to improve the experience for themselves and their children.

Heads Up — Tips for Educator

Feast for Ten (Fiesta para Diez), the book selected for this lesson, gives parents and children a visually interesting grocery store experience. It contains some clear pictures of how children can be involved in grocery shopping with a simple pattern of counting items.

When parents talk about shopping with children, they often voice concerns about children having behavior problems in the grocery store. Parents may share feelings of embarrassment, shame, frustration, or anger. It is important to acknowledge how parents may feel when they or their child are having a tough time in the grocery store. However, in family centered education we must also keep conversations comfortable for the adults and children in the room. This can be tricky when talking about situations such as

Grocery Shopping with Families

“candy aisle tantrums.” Encourage parents to share concerns in a way that is respectful of children in the room. Below are some guidelines to consider if parents ask, “What should I do when my child acts up while shopping?”

- Play games, or use the survival tools from your purse. You can use some of the strategies you learned in this class when you hit that “tough time.”
- Encourage children to help (“redirect” them). For example, ask a preschooler to help you find the next item on your list.
- Give children positive messages about the good things they do. “Thanks for helping choose such a delicious bag of apples for our snacks this week.” “I appreciate the way you are unloading our groceries at the check out stand.”
- Avoid the toy or candy aisle – choose a checkout line without candy or other impulse purchases lined up next to it. If there is not a line at your store without these items, ask the manager to set one up.
- Have a few clear rules and expectations, such as use a quiet voice, stay nearby (or sit in the cart).
- Take a deep breath if you get angry. After calming down consider leaving the store or making other arrangements.

Grocery Shopping with Families

Kindergarten	• Literacy (counting and naming fruits and vegetables)
Readiness	• Planning (children can help with grocery list, for example)
Skills	• Self control (behaving appropriately in public)
	• Physical skills (picking out foods for family)
Target Audience	Family-Centered education is targeted to mixed groups: adults with their children of preschool age.
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objective 1: Participants will describe one strategy they currently use to make grocery shopping a positive experience.• Objective 2: Participants will identify one new tool to use to prevent family conflict or tantrums at the grocery store or market.• Objective 3: Participants will identify two learning activities they can do with young children in the grocery store.
Time Needed	30-45 minutes
	• See section “Expanding and Adapting this Lesson.”

Grocery Shopping with Families

Materials

- Music and player: *We All Live Together, Vol. 5* by Greg and Steve
- Book: *Feast for Ten (Fiesta para Diez)* by Cathryn Falwell
- Flip Chart with easel or large paper
- Markers
- Purse or backpack containing:
 - a healthy snack
 - shopping list
 - paper and small notepad
 - WIC Food Instruments
 - board book
 - water bottle
 - small toy
 - calculator
- Basket with plastic fruits and vegetables
- Handouts for parents: (in English and/or Spanish)
 - *Tips for Parents*
 - *Shopping List*
 - *Shopping Survival Kit*
 - *Learning Games at the Grocery Store*
 - A Parenting Resources List (if available)

Grocery Shopping with Families

Getting Ready

1. Review the book *Feast for Ten (Fiesta para Diez)*. Think about how to use this family's positive shopping experience as a launching point to have your families share successful strategies they use, explore new tools that will help them avoid family conflicts or tantrums, and learn about ways to engage their kids in fun learning activities at the market.
2. Decide which of the learning games at the grocery store you will share with parents during the class. (Refer to the handout *Learning Games at the Grocery Store*.) Gather any additional props you might like to use (for example, a basket with plastic foods).
3. Copy parent handouts for your group (see Materials list).
4. Gather purse items (see Materials list).
5. Put overview on large sheet of paper or flip chart.

Grocery Shopping with Families:

- Welcome and Introduction
- Book Sharing: *Feast for Ten (Fiesta para Diez)*
- Family Activities: Making Grocery Shopping Fun
- Take Home Learning Activities

6. Cue music to "Let's Go to the Market" from *We All Live Together, Vol. 5* by Greg and Steve

Grocery Shopping with Families

Overview

Time needed

Activities

Gathering

Opening Music

5 minutes

1. Welcome and Introduction

- Introduce self
- Ask families to introduce themselves
- Note that class is for adults and children both

5 minutes

2. Warm Up Activity

- Ask: : who shops together?
- Ask a child to share what is fun about shopping with mom, dad or other adult
- Ask a parent to share a fun experience in the store with a child
- Note that shopping together can be stressful, or it can be fun

10 minutes

3. Book Sharing: Feast for Ten (Fiesta para Diez))

- Read slowly, showing pictures
- Encourage participation from families
- Reinforce the value of reading together as family

10 minutes

4. Family Activity: Making Grocery Shopping Fun

A. Review from the book

- Ask: what did the family in the book do to make shopping fun?

B. Brainstorm:

- Ask: what do you do to get ready for shopping?
- Use flip chart to record good ideas for preparing for shopping trip

continued on next page

Grocery Shopping with Families

Overview

continued

C. Hands on Activity

- Bring out the shopping purse. Empty items on table
- Ask each child to choose an item
- Discuss how this item might be useful while on a shopping trip
- Ask for other ideas – other items families might bring to the store
- Note that this “survival kit” can be useful in other places: bus stop, waiting room, restaurant

5 minutes

5. Take Home Learning Activities

- Tell families about games that can be played at the store
- Ask for their ideas
- Provide handouts

Closing

6. Thank you and Goodbye

- Thank the group for coming to the class
- Answer questions as needed

**Total time:
35 minutes**

Grocery Shopping with Families

Welcome and
Introduction
(5 min)

Play the song, "Let's Go to the Market" from *We All Live Together, Vol. 5* by Greg and Steve, to set a positive tone as families arrive.

Introduce yourself and ask parents and children to introduce themselves.

Tell parents the purpose of the class is to explore ways to make grocery shopping with children a pleasant time for families and a fun learning time for kids.

Explain that both parents and kids will be a part of this class, and that you will be doing some reading, sharing ideas, and parents and children will be doing some fun activities together about shopping.

Post the agenda on the wall.

Warm Up
Activity
(5 min)

Ask children and parents to raise their hands if they grocery shop together. Count the number of hands raised.

Ask one of the children to tell you what is the most fun thing about going shopping.

Ask one of the parents what he or she likes about taking his/her child to the grocery store.

Book Sharing
(10 min)

Introduce the book *Feast for Ten (Fiesta para Diez)* by Cathryn Falwell, a story about one family that goes shopping together.

Encourage children and parents to sit where they are able to see and hear the story.

Read the story – showing the pictures to the children and parents as you go.

Take time to look at the pictures and practice counting and colors with questions for the children.

Grocery Shopping with Families

Ideas for engaging children in the story:

"Point to the potatoes. Lets count them..."

"What do you see on this page that is red..."

"What healthy foods have they put in their shopping cart?"

If there are no children present, show the book to the parents. Ask for ideas why sharing books and telling stories might be a great way to help kids — and can be enjoyable for all of us. (For example, it helps build important skills they will need in school.)

Encourage families to get this book or another like it, and read it to their family. Emphasize that sharing stories, as well as reading books, is a positive family activity.

Family Activity
(10 min)

A. Discussion

Start a flip chart page labeled "Before Shopping DO" to write down ideas from the group.

Explain that usually when shopping as a family is a success, there are some things that have been done to prepare.

Usually when shopping doesn't go well, there are some common things that may have happened.

This is an excellent time to acknowledge that shopping can sometimes be stressful for parents and children. For example you could say, "Yes, it can be hard to sit in the cart for a long time. You found a good way to keep your children involved!"

Grocery Shopping with Families

Ask children and parents to think about what they do **before** they go to the store.

Before Shopping DO:

- Make a grocery list.
- Ask children to add favorite healthy foods to the list
- Eat a snack, nurse the baby
- Talk about grocery store rules and expectations to children old enough to understand them. Rules should be few and simple. (keep hands off the food, stay in or near the cart, use inside voices).

Ask children or parents how planning ahead helps them be successful. (For example, making a shopping list might help a family save money, make shorter or fewer trips to the store, allow them to use coupons.)

Ask for more ideas of what they can do ahead of time that will help make a shopping experience a good one. Ask, "What did the family in the book do?" Some ideas might include:

- Helping their mother
- Finding certain kinds of foods
- Counting the right number of potatoes, tomatoes, etc.
- Helping to load/unload the groceries

Promoting Safety: This is a good time to remind parents that if shopping with an infant, make sure you have a baby carrier to safely carry an infant while in the store (car seat that fits into the shopping cart, or sling or backpack.)

Grocery Shopping with Families

B. Hands On Activity: Shopping Purse

Tell the families that you have a purse filled with things that they might take along with them to the store to make it a positive experience.

Pull out your “purse” or bag (filled with items – see Materials list) to use as a prop.

Empty all items onto a table.

Ask each child to choose an item and say what it is and put it in the purse.

Discuss each item with the group, asking why it is useful to have along.

These “survival tools” are great for bus rides, waiting rooms, restaurants, etc. – any place where it is useful to keep children occupied in a confined space.

Grocery Shopping with Families

Take Home
Learning
Activities
(5 min)

Tell families that there are also fun games they can play in the store that will help their child learn important skills that they will need to be successful in school.

For toddlers and preschool aged children shopping is a great way to practice skills like counting, sorting, and organizing.

Young babies can learn about their world when you show them things and talk to them in the store, helping them build language skills.

Playful learning time can make grocery shopping less stressful for parents and kids.

Share a few favorite ideas for shopping games with parents. For example, demonstrate a game or two with a child in your group and a basket of plastic foods:

Empty a basket or sack of plastic fruits and vegetables.

Children can:

1. Name them.
2. Count them.
3. Name the colors.

Ask families to share a shopping game that they enjoy.

Pass out handouts for parents:

- *Tips for Parents*
- *Shopping List*
- *Shopping Survival Kit*
- *Learning Games at the Grocery Store*
- A Parenting Resources List (if available)

Grocery Shopping with Families

Closure Thank the parents and children for participating in the family class.

Encourage them to think about how their families can make grocery shopping more fun, how they can prepare before going to the store, and how they can use fun learning games on these outings.

Expanding and Adapting this Lesson

1. If You Have an Audience that uses Farmers' Markets a Lot

Market Day, by Lois Ehlert, is another book you might consider using as an alternative. The bright colored folk art can be used to talk with children and parents about going to an outdoor market.

Saturday Sancocho (Sancocho Del Sabado) by Leyla Torres is another book about going to the farmers' market to barter goods for chicken and vegetables.

2. Other Alternate Books

Jonathan Goes to the Grocery Store by Susan Baggette is part of the Jonathan Adventure series, with full-color photographs, not drawings. His grandparents take him to the grocery store; and to the library. Smiling, helpful employees greet and interact with the toddler, providing positive experiences and evoking community spirit.

What's for Supper? by Mary Risk is a bilingual book that shows a family shopping for dinner.

See the "Tips for Parents" handout for additional books.

3. Make a Shopping Book.

Invite the children to make a special book that they can take on trips to the grocery store.

- Ask parents to help their child staple five cards (about 3" x 4") of different colors on the top or side.
- Decorate with stickers.
- Remind families that this book can be for making a little list, drawing pictures, or for whatever they would like. Suggest keeping this book as a special "shopping-only" toy